

New hockey showcased

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CBC's popular show, *Dragon's Den*, brought their crew to Prince George over the weekend to film local inventor Jean Jacques Giguere's new game *vitockey*, a blend of the words "vite" (French for fast) and hockey.

Giguere was featured last season on the show, which gives Canadian inventors a chance to pitch their product to a team of no-nonsense judges – or dragons – in hopes of receiving investment in their invention. *Dragon's Den* is about making money for both the contestants and the panel of judges.

And since Giguere didn't impress the judges enough for them to open their cheque books, he was sent packing.

But for the sixth season of the show, producers are following up with inventors who had an impact, whether their businesses are still running or not.

"This season we are doing a special show entirely made up of updates. We are touring the country to see what [some contestants] have been up to since *Dragon's Den*," said Richard Maeror, associate producer for CBC.

Thus their visit to Prince George. Despite not getting any of the adaptation of hockey and lacrosse earned him some profile across the country.

"He was just such a popular pitcher. We got so much reaction from our audience from [him]," said Maeror.

Since the show, Giguere has paid for a patent on *vitockey* and hopes it will eventually gain mainstream traction.

That may just happen now that audiences can get a glimpse of a



Jean Jacques Giguere works at laying down temporary boards to change the shape of the Elksentre ice surface Sunday morning.

CITIZEN PHOTO BY CHUCK NEBETT

real game in progress, but first, a rink had to be specially retro-fitted to accommodate the sport.

When he appeared on the show, Giguere had some mock-ups but not nothing to the extent of having an ice rink re-done.

So CBC is footing the bill for needed changes to ice and for local amateur hockey players to test out the sport.

To properly present the sport, half of the ice at Elksentre Arena

was transformed overnight from traditional hockey markers, to vibrant turquoise circles and a thick centre line.

"The rink might look simple, but it took years to figure out," said Giguere of his design.

Around the rink are ellipse-shaped boards that stop the hockey pucks from getting caught in corners and increase the chances for players to pass to each other.

And so far, hockey players are giv-

ing the game the thumbs up.

"It seems easy to pick up on. It's fun," said Kirk Hards. "It resembles roller hockey most. With the nets farther forward, a lot of plays go on back there, and as soon as you shoot the puck you have to be ready, it doesn't stop anywhere."

Goalie Clayton Hapke agrees.

"With so much space behind the net it is harder to keep track of the play," he said. "You have to change positions and slide around a lot

more, and keep your eye on the puck. They are doing fancier stuff with the puck, and there is a lot more action. The puck is constantly moving, and the transitions are lightning fast."

Dragon's Den six season begins Sept. 14, and the *Vitockey* update will air on February 1st.

To learn more about *Vitockey*, visit www.vitockey.com, and to learn more about *Dragon's Den* visit www.cbc.ca/dragonsden.

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SUBMITTED GRAPHIC

'Vitockey' features a radically different playing surface to its more traditionally predecessor.

GAMECHANGER

It's either the new hockey or absolute heresy, but it does reshape how you look at Canada's game

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A Prince George man has invented golden variation on our two national sports. What Jean Jacques Giguère has designed is an adaptation to hockey (ice or inline) and lacrosse. He calls it "vitockey," a compound of the words "hockey" and both "vite" and "vit" (French for "fast" and "life" respectively).

The CBC television show *Dragon's Den* is coming to Prince George this weekend to film the new invention in action. Their cameras will be focused on players demonstrating vitockey at the Elksentre arena.

Giguère could just as easily have applied his principles to baseball or football or soccer.

"Go for it, it applies to everything," he said about the foundation features of his invention.

It is based on a universal mathematical formula rooted in what artists, architects and scientists

know as the "golden ratio" or "golden mean."

Giguère's playing surface is the chief difference. He told *The Citizen* it is measured out precisely according to the golden ratio so that the puck, boards, net, lines, face-off dots, even the shape of the playing area are built from that baseline.

Additionally, Giguère's new game also incorporates the universal rules of the colour spectrum, whereby he presents to the viewer's eyes the best possible combinations of colour for the brain's liking. No ads are permitted on the boards, for example, because that clashes with the brain's natural functions "maybe only for a billionth of a second, but it causes hesitation."

It is a blank canvass for all involved, he explained, so the athletes perform more purely.

"It's so when you step on the ice, you know all the physical elements instinctually, and that goes for the spectator as well," he said. "Your brain understands all of this instantly."

The new design has other benefits, too, he said, like maximizing speed.

This flows like

... music and the brain wants that.

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'It plays like magic'

— from page 1

"It plays like magic," he said, admiring the flow of the rehearsals held on Wednesday by some of the city's best inline players. "When you shoot the puck, it just moves, it never stops. Regular hockey stops or slows all the time. This flows like classical music, and the brain wants that. The players and spectators do too."

The invention doesn't lend well to mass marketing, but Giguère did take out a patent on the "elliptical playing area kit" which is the physical structure inside which the game takes place. It is oval, not a rectangle with rounded corners.

Giguère pitched his idea once already to the Dragon's Den and he saw immediately that he was not being taken seriously.

"I didn't want this [the television cameras in Prince George], they called me," he said. "They told me they wanted to do an update. I told them I didn't have the game, I didn't have a prototype, but I did what I could to make it work."

Because of all the interconnecting math, you can't change the size of the goal crease or the distance from the boards to the net (much deeper than conventional hockey or lacrosse) without causing all elements of the playing area to be altered proportionally, so those things are now essentially set, but the rules are still a work in progress. He is tweaking things like icing and offside as the demonstration



CITIZEN PHOTO BY BRENT BRANTEN

Players try out vitokey in Kin1 Wednesday afternoon.

as the players rehearse the game to familiarize with the DIMENSION of an ellipse. The ice level kit (multiple passes) was not into place = the above is present hockey inside a fake ellipse.